

18. INTRODUCTION TO KOREA

GRADE LEVEL: K-2

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SUBJECT: Global Education

TIME REQUIRED: 2-4 weeks

OBJECTIVES:

This cultural study serves as an introduction to Korea for young children. Its goal is to offer students exposure to the culture of Korea through hands-on activities.

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

Assortment of artifacts, videos, handouts, CDs, tapes, music, literature readings, and displays

PROCEDURE:

I typically begin my unit on Korea in the middle of February and conclude it in the middle of March. It follows a cultural study on China and is followed by a unit on Japan. This provides comparisons and contrasts of these three distinct Asian cultures. It is also very valuable because Honolulu has a high concentration of these three ethnic groups. My Korean unit is an integration of my firsthand experiences, of Korean language and history, augmented by ethnic music and food. During the course, have the students construct indigenous crafts in order to create a tangible representation of Korean culture. On a map I show my students the proximity of Korea to Hawaii and how it is located close to China and Japan. I also show and explain the significance of Korea's flag. Later on the children will make their own Korean flags. In addition, I give the children a very general and simplistic historical overview of Korea.

Place visual displays of photographs, postcards, and artifacts on poster board throughout the classroom so the children are exposed to various cultural and historical sites of Korea. I show the children a tape from Chongdong Theater so they become aware of traditional Korean performances. The children greatly enjoy the Farmer's Dance, Fan Dance, and Drum Dance. Also during our unit on Korea, the children create their own celadon pottery with the help of our art teacher.

It is important to mention that I continually use my classroom Web site throughout our cultural study on Korea. Here is a Web link documenting my trip to Korea in 2000: : <http://www.punahou.edu/js/gradeK/f/websites/korea-fellowship.html>

Also, the following Web site has various Web links created for Korea. During my Korean unit, these Web sites are consistently displayed on my large screen classroom television: <http://www.punahou.edu/js/gradeK/f/websites/korea.html>

The literature I utilize includes: Han, Suzanne Crowder, "Let's Visit Seoul," Hollym, 1993; Han, Suzanne Crowder, "Let's Visit Korea," Hollym, 1999; Vorhees, Duane and Mueller, Mark, "The Lazy Man/The Spring of Youth," Hollym, 1990; "Exploring Korea/Inside King Sejong's Gate," Curriculum Corporation 1999; Han, Suzanne Crowder, "Let's Learn about Korea," Hollym, 1992.

During this unit, leave extra time in order to compare and contrast Korean culture with other cultures. For exam-

ple, we compare the various burial mounds of China with those of Korea. Another excellent contrast is Panmunjom and the Berlin Wall. We will learn basic words as well as how to count in Korean. I show the children an array of videos, and we were also very fortunate to be presented with some videotapes from the Korea Foundation. In addition, I have purchased other videos from the Asia Society that depict Korean schools, community, family, and life at home on the elementary school level. There is also a collection of Korean-related multimedia resources at my school's many libraries. Beyond the libraries are various excellent resources in the Honolulu community concerning Korean affairs. For example, I take my students on an annual field trip to a local kimchi-producing company (see photos on next page). We also have a Korean Consulate, many Korean markets, and many Korean churches. The culmination of this unit is a Korean celebration for which I employ parental support. I implement three learning centers, which consist of making *bulgogi* (a popular Korean beef barbeque), taking pictures of the children who dress up in *hanbok* (traditional Korean garments), and playing the Korean game *yut* (see photos on next page). This cultural celebration is highlighted by a wide array of Korean culinary delights. As we typically have quite a few children in the classroom of Korean ethnicity, this gives them the opportunity to learn more about their own culture. In addition, it bestows upon them ethnic pride and understanding from fellow classmates.

EVALUATION:

The assessment of my unit on Korea can be reflected by the joy and excitement of my students. Being greeted in the morning by the Korean saying *ahnyoung haseyo* or the passion that my students express when they are able to identify the burial mounds and observatory structures of Kyongju definitely demonstrates the value of this cultural unit. Also, in my classroom, parent participation has always been very impressive. The feedback I receive from them has always been positive and grateful. I continue my cultural study of Korea because I know how many young students have enjoyed an introductory glimpse of this very special country.

RESOURCES:

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VISIT TO A KIMCHI FACTORY 2002



Kimchi made in Honolulu



Cabbage being cut up



Kimchi being bottled

PICTURES FROM PUNAHOU SCHOOL'S KOREA CELEBRATION 2002



Students playing yut



Students in traditional Korean clothes (*hanbok*)